

# Forgiveness Flour

When I went to the door, at the whisper of knocking,  
I saw Simeon Gantner's daughter, Kathleen, standing  
There, in her shawl and her shame, sent to ask  
"Forgiveness Flour" for her bread. "Forgiveness Flour,"  
We call it in our corner. If one has erred, one  
Is sent to ask for flour of his neighbors. If they loan it  
To him, that means he can stay, but if they refuse, he had  
Best take himself off. I looked at Kathleen . . .  
What a jewel of a daughter, though not much like her  
Father, more's the pity. "I'll give you flour," I  
Said, and went to measure it. Measuring was the rub.  
If I gave too much, neighbors would think I made sin  
Easy, but if I gave too little, they would label me  
"close." While I stood measuring, Joel, my husband  
Came in from the mill, a great bag of flour on his  
Shoulder, and seeing her there, shrinking in the  
Doorway, he tossed the bag at her feet. "Here, take  
All of it." And so she had flour enough for many loaves,  
While I stood measuring.  
--Margarite Stewart

